

Happiness Pony

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Worcester's Journal of Fossil Fuel Exploration

December 2012



At Union Station
Give a book - Take a book

Worcester Coal Mine. — The anthracite coal deposits near the junction of Lincoln and Plantation streets, now known as the Old Coal Mine, were put to use in 1823 and at first the Worcester coal seemed better than Lehigh. In 1824 an attempt was made to form the Massachusetts Coal Company. Mining went on and the coal was used in the Worcester Brewery of Trumbull & Ward and in Burbank's paper mill. Coal from the land of William E. Green was burned in the brewery in 1827. By November, 1828, a shaft twelve feet wide, eight feet high, had been carried into the hill about sixty feet and a railway laid to transport the coal. In February, 1829, the Worcester Coal Company was incorporated, and in March of the same year the Worcester Railway Company with a capital of \$50,000 to build a railway from the mine to the Lake and Blackstone Canal. But soon afterward the whole enterprise was abandoned.

There was another attempt to work the coal mine in 1897. Silas E. Harthan was employed by some capitalists to reopen the mine after it had been abandoned for seventy years. He found it forty feet deep and full of water. He pumped out 200,000 gallons and took out about twenty tons of coal. He burned some of the coal in his own furnace. It was found to be mixed with graphite and other impurities, and the conclusion was reached that the mine could not be operated profitably on account of the inferior quality of the coal.

In 1856 peat was used as fuel in the wire mills, and in three years 2,000 cords were consumed. In April, 1856, the Worcester Peat Company was formed. Evidently coal became cheaper as a fuel after the railroads to Pennsylvania were built, and peat was abandoned. The deposits of peat in the city are very large. (from *History of Worcester and Its People*, Charles Nutt, 1919)



Cable access for
Worcester on channel 13.
wccatv.com



CLASSIFIED ADS

BOOKS, YIDDISH+ENGLISH

Not In The Same Breath by Zackary Sholem Berger: 1/3 Yiddish, 1/3 English, 2/3 Pretty Pictures. bit.ly/NITSBAmaazon

Cat In The Hat and Curious George in Yiddish. yiddishcat.com

MUGS, TIKI

Scallywag Ceramics. Exotic curiosities. scallywagceramics.com

Coal Discovered in Worcester

In 1820, on the estate of William Green (now Green Hill Park), coal was discovered. After a few years of scheming and small-scale excavation, mining began in earnest, and hundreds of tons of coal came out of the mine in the 1820s and 1830s. In 1838, due to frequent flooding and the poor quality of the coal, the mine was closed. You can visit the site at mile 2.86 of Worcester's East Side Trail. (*Mike Benedetti. Below: Remains of the entrance to the Old Coal Mine.*)



Miners of the Long Tail

Punk rock is known for being primitive and easy to play. You can slap together a punk band with two friends who have never played instruments before, play your first show after a week of practice, and record your first EP in a month. Every day, thousands of bands form and thousands of others collapse, in an eternal cycle of studded leather and crumpled guitar tab printouts.

In every genre, the vast majority of bands, good or bad, are scarcely heard and go unremembered. Yet punk bands of all skill levels are likely to have made a demo tape or EP, no matter how short-lived.

These obscure, one-recording bands are haphazardly known as "Killed By Death." KBD enthusiasts sit beside a never-ending stream of material, panning for flakes of gold amongst the crudely-drawn record sleeves and muddy production. With junksick eyes they look up from their searching to wonder: "Who were these mysterious punks? — and did they know how good they were?"

These are the miners of the long tail, the lonely addicts who don't care about the Bad Brains or how famous you might be. Despite the fever of their addiction and the greed that it may bring, the KBD miners are every punk band's greatest fan. For long after your days in the garage are over—your band's demo tapes may be fished from the depths and cherished. (*Shane Capra*)

Beneath the Snow

Earthworms have long been credited as a friend of the gardener and of every child hoping to gross someone out. But in North America, not all earthworms are harmless.

The Ice Age left relatively few surviving worms to turn over the soil. The forest floor was a lot like your backyard compost pile, slowly rotting away. Trees and other plants adapted to this thick layer of organic matter. 🐛

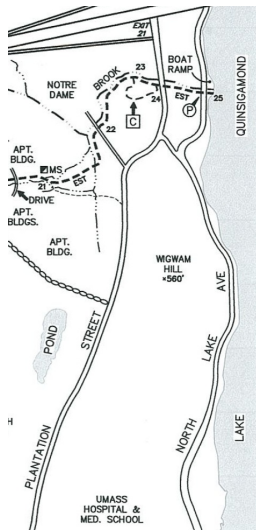


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Detail of the East Side Trail map. The coal mine shaft is marked at "MS."

"Mothers News" IT IS A NEWSPAPER. mothersnews.net

Koan Study

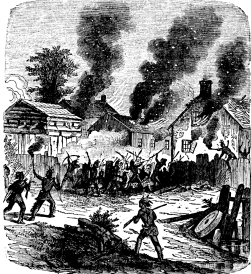
A monk asked Master Joshu, "Has a dog Buddha-nature or not?" Joshu answered, "No." Why did he say this?

If he doesn't have fleas, why not leave him there? —Bruce "Snow Ghost" Russell



Then in the 1700s, wriggly European visitors crawled out of bulbs brought over by settlers, and now of 182 varieties in the US and Canada, a third are invasive. The forest floor is more like your worm bin, teeming with creepy crawlers. Plants that were adapted to a slower decomposition cycle (like ashes, poplars, birches, and sugar maples) struggle. Other plants take their place. (*Jen Burt*)





True Action Tales of Worcester
Matoonas
Chapter Four: The Brookfield Raid

Bolstered by their success raiding Mendon in July 1675, Matoonas and the Pakachoag war party moved west to join their fellow Nipmucs, the Quaboags, in their assault on the largest settlement in Central Massachusetts, Brookfield.


A Quaboag sachem, Muttawmp, was also set on war. Ephraim Curtis, who was a trader and leading settler of Quinsigamond (now Worcester), attempted to negotiate the Quaboags away from joining Metacom's resistance movement. In order to intimidate the natives into passivity, Curtis was joined by 30 armed men on horseback led by Captains Thomas Wheeler and Edward Hutchinson (whose descendants include Franklin Roosevelt and the Bush family).

While the English were on their way to the Quaboag camp on August 1, 1675, they were ambushed by 200 warriors in a battle known as Wheeler's Surprise. Eight men were killed and many more wounded. The English retreated to the tavern of John Ayers (who had died in the attack) in Brookfield where all 80 residents were huddled for protection. Matoonas and Muttawmp destroyed all the other buildings in the town and besieged the tavern for 3 days before English reinforcements arrived.


After the fighting was over the town was evacuated. It would remain unoccupied for twelve years.

Matoonas and Muttawmp led many more attacks on English settlements and infrastructure in the next few months. The settlement at Quinsigamond, which included Ephraim Curtis's trading post and six or seven houses, was burned to the ground on December 2.


The backlash would be severe. Of the estimated 9,000 people who died in the conflict known as King Philips War, two-thirds were indigenous people. The English began to set up reservations and slowly enact the program of genocide which would continue across the continent. (Joe Scully. The illustration is an old engraving of the Brookfield raid, source unknown.)



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Amanda Kidd Schall
art from bicycles
amandakiddschall.com



Donnie and I are a lot alike and really different at the same time. If we were both civil rights leaders I'd be Martin Luther King and he'd be Malcolm X. – Jordan



Entering the Christmas Dimension

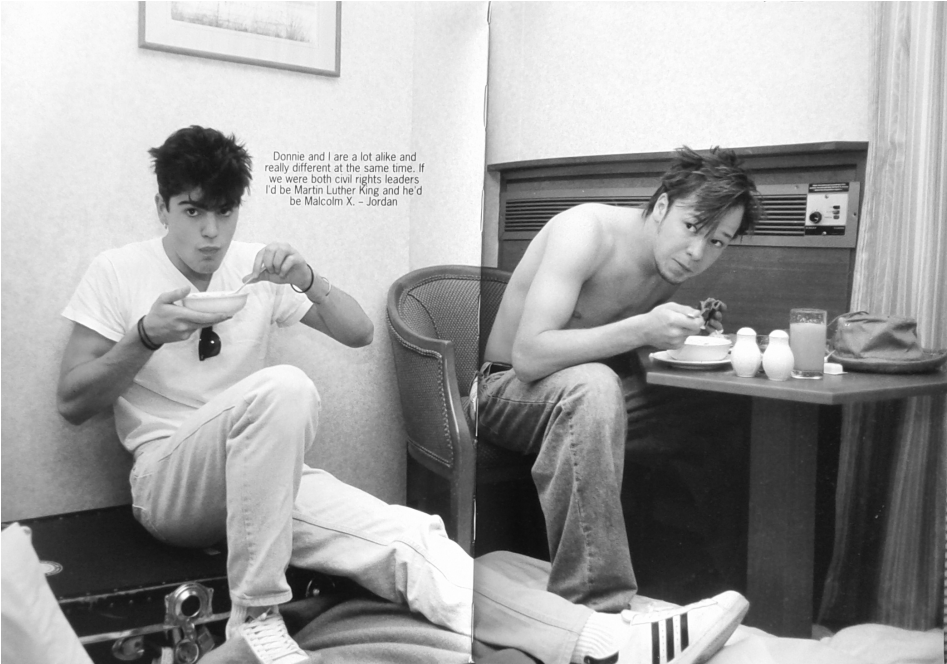
There is a door. A door in the Worcester City Hall Christmas tree. Inside is a place where holiday cheer is so dense as to form a solid, a place where goodwill to men is present at such high levels that even Santa might not survive it, a place, dare I say, of Maximum Christmas. The Christmas Dimension. (Photo: Shane Capra.)

The Unitarian King of Transylvania


The debate began on March 3, 1568, and lasted for 10 days, beginning each morning at 5:00 AM. With the reformation in full swing, King John Sigismund Zápolya of Transylvania was searching for the one true religion for himself and for his kingdom. The winner of the debate, emerging on March 13 bloody but unbowed, was Ferenz David. David had been a Catholic priest, then a Calvinist bishop, but settled at last into the doctrine of Unitarianism. 🐉

New Kids on the Block

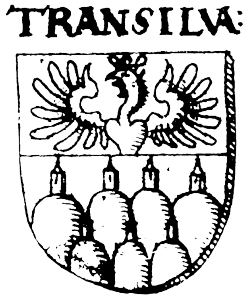
Art thrives on constraints. One such constraint is a contract to do a fan book on a hot pop group. The genre has its triumphs. Lester Bangs's fan bio on *Blondie* (1980) is one; Lynn Goldsmith's huge glossy coffee table book on the *New Kids on the Block* (1990) is another. Every page of Goldsmith's book is a meditation on youth and fame, asking "Isn't this strange? Isn't this joyous?" The 22 years since publication have seen the book's rich finish develop a patina of irony, adding appeal and meaning. Each page now asks: "Isn't this strange? Isn't this joyous? Isn't this fleeting?" (MB)



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King Sigismund had been convinced and converted to Unitarianism, but rather than make it the state religion, he issued an edict of religious freedom, declaring that "preachers shall preach and explain the Gospel each according to his understanding of it, and if the congregation like it, well, if not, no one shall compel them for their souls would not be satisfied, but they shall be permitted to keep a preacher whose teaching they approve." Nevertheless, Unitarianism became very popular throughout Transylvania. After World War One, Transylvania was combined into the current state of Romania. Today, there are 141 Unitarian places of worship in Romania, mostly Hungarian-speaking in the Transylvanian region. According to the (North American) Unitarian Universalist Association, that's one more than we have in the state of Massachusetts. (Holly Jones)



POCKET DOORBELL
It is in the Apple App Store and will make your phone a contemporary doorbell. CNET called it "Dumb, yes, but kind of cool, too."

HAPPINESS PONY Income Statement November 2012	
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Donations from editors	\$42.80
Ad sales	\$0.00
Other donations	\$0.00
Expenses	
500 copies	\$40.80
Test copies	\$2.00
Net Income	
	\$0.00
Happiness Pony is a free monthly newspaper published in Worcester, Massachusetts. This issue was edited by Shane Capra, Jen Burt, & Mike Benedetti.	
editor@happinesspony.com	